

33. INVASION OF ALLIGATOR WEED *ALTERNANTHERA PHILOXEROIDES* (MART.) GRISEB. IN ANDAMAN ISLANDS

During a botanical exploration of the North Andaman, specimens of Alligator Weed, *Alternanthera philoxeroides* were collected. This species has not been reported from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands so far (Rao 1986; Mathew 1998). The colonization and expansion of Alligator Weed in the marshy habitats of the Andaman Islands was observed to be a threat to the indigenous flora.

Alternanthera philoxeroides (Mart.) Griseb. in Abh. Ges. Wiss. Goett. 24: 36. 1879; Maheswari in *Bull. Bot. Surv. India* 6: 313. 1965; Mishra in *J. Econ. Tax. Bot.* 5: 225. 1984; Saldanha & Rao in *Saldanha Fl. Karnataka* 1: 165. 1984; Raju in *Indian Bot. Repr.* 5: 207. 1986. *Bucholzia philoxeroides* Mart., *Amar.* 107. 1825. (Amaranthaceae)

Perennial, aquatic or marshy, decumbent herbs. Stems fistular, longitudinally striate. Leaves lanceolate, obovate, acute to rounded, cuneate at base, 4-7 cm long. Inflorescence usually solitary, axillary pedunculate, globular head; also terminal and sessile. Tepals 5, glabrous, shining white, subequal, 1-nerved, three or four times as long as bracts. Stamens 5, united at base; pseudostaminodes distinct and extending the stamens. Ovary globose, dorsally compressed; stigma globose, capitate.

Vernacular name: Ponne.

Popular name: Alligator Weed.

Habitat: In marshes, ditches and paddy fields.

Fl. & Fr.: August-December.

Specimen examined: India, North Andaman, Diglipur: 8.xi.2001, CSReddy 2216; Radhanagar 16.xi.2001, CSReddy 2367; Mohanpur: 2.xii.2001, CSReddy 2532 (CAL & KUH).

Uses: Leaves eaten as vegetable. Tamil settlers apply warm leaf juice (after boiling in coconut oil) to blacken hair.

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SUDHAKAR REDDY
Forestry & Ecology Division,
National Remote Sensing Agency,
Balanagar, Hyderabad 500 037,
Andhra Pradesh, India.

VATSAVAYA S. RAJU
Department of Botany, Kakatiya University,
Warangal 506 009, Andhra Pradesh, India.

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34. SOME INTERESTING ADDITIONS TO THE FLORA OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS FROM NORTH ANDAMAN

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (the Bay Islands) are a group of about 350 islands and over 200 islets situated off the eastern coast of India in a junction box with Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean on one side and South China Sea and the Pacific on the other.

The presence of over 2000 indigenous (353 endemic taxa) and 500 exotic species of flowering plants within a land area of 8,290 sq. km is a significant feature of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The degree of endemism is about 17.6% (Reddy *et al.* 2002).

During a botanical exploration of the North Andaman Islands, we recorded nine interesting species, not recorded from Andaman and Nicobar Islands so far (Vasudeva Rao 1986; Mathew 1998). They are being reported here for the

first time with a brief description. All the specimens are preserved in CAL.

Enumeration

Abildgaardia ovata (Burm.f.) Kral in *Sida* 4: 71. 1971. *Fimbristylis ovata* (Burm.f.) Kern, *Blumea* 15: 126. 1967 & in Steenis, *Fl. Males* 7: 565. 1974. *Carex ovata* Burm.f. *Fl. Indica* 194. 1768. *Fimbristylis monostachyos* (L.) Hasskl. *Pl. Jav. Rar.* 61. 1848; *FBI* 6: 649. 1893; Fischer in *Gamble* 3: 1660 (1152). 1931. (Cyperaceae).

Stem densely tufted, 5-25 cm, slender. Leaves flat, to 15 cm, margins inrolled, to 1 mm across, scabrid, apex obtuse; ligule absent. Inflorescence with 1-2 spikelets; spikelets terete, 5-8 mm. Glumes basally distichous, apically spiral. Nut